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#11

SAM KIETH • WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS

THE MAXX

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"I MEAN, IF YOU SEARCH YOUR HEART, YOU'LL SEE I'M RIGHT."

IT'S JUST LIKE THAT PLANE.

IT'S GOT TO FLY.

IT KNOWS IT DOES.

AND SO DO I.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE DRIVING.

OKAY, BAD ANALOGY. STILL...

LOOK, MAXX. YOU'VE GOT TO *GIVE* SOME HERE, OKAY?

C'MON, MAN...

...PLEASE DON'T SHUT ME OUT.

WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS...YOU RESCUE ME. I BAIL YOU OUT. I LIVE IN ***YOUR*** FANTASY. YOU LIVE IN ***MINE.***

WE'VE GOT TO STOP PRETENDING.

BUT IF YOU LEAVE...

...EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE.

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE

WHY DON'T YOU *SAY* SOMETHING? YOU MAKE ME FEEL SO *GUILTY*

IT'S NICE UP HERE, HUH?

SURE.

THE ONLY WAY I CAN SET YOU FREE IS TO *LEAVE*

PEOPLE LOOK LIKE ANTS, HUH?

DEEP.

AND IT'S THE ONLY WAY I'LL BE FREE TOO. CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?

HE'S COOL! HE'S BIG AN' STRONG AN' PURPLE AN' COOL.

IS NOT! HE'S GOT NEAT CLAWS! AN' BIG TEETH! AN'...

NO, HE'S NOT. HE'S A WIMP. YOU SAW THE WAY HE JUST RAN FROM THAT SHARK-GUY. HE'S A COWARD.

MAXX IS NOT COOL. MR. GONE IS COOL.

MR. GONE'S NOT COOL! HE'S TOO SKINNY!

HE'S NOT SKINNY...HE'S WIRY!

YOU'RE BOTH IDIOTS.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT A HERO *IS.*

LIKE *YOU* DO, SARAH.

MAXX IS A HERO 'CAUSE HE'S GOT BIG MUSCLES.

MAXX IS *WEAK!*

IT TAKES SOMEONE EVIL LIKE MR. GONE TO KILL BAD GUYS!

HE COULD SMOKE **BOTH** *OF YOU WITHOUT RAISING A* **FINGER!**

sigh

COME ON, KENT. STUPID GIRLS.

SO, DID YOU TELL HIM?

YEAH. I COULDN'T HAVE HANDLED IT ANY WORSE IF I HAD *CUT OUT* HIS HEART AND *STAMPED* ON IT.

SO, IT WENT SMOOTHLY THEN.

HEY, YOU'RE DEALING WITH A *PRO* HERE.

HE'S SO... *SO FIXATED* ON ME, SARAH. WHEN DOES MY RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIM END?

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE WORRIED YOU'LL FIND HIM OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW, IGNORING THE *RESTRAINING ORDER* AND *KILLING* ALL YOUR PETS, ARE YOU?

WELL, ARE YOU?

SARAH, OF COURSE NOT. IT'S JUST... OH, I DON'T KNOW.

I JUST HAVE TO REMEMBER I'M RIGHT. TO STAND MY GROUND.

I HAVE TO STAY FIRM, AND NOT...

FLOOSH

...BUDGE.

THUT!

BRRROOOO

REALLY? I DIDN'T THINK THAT GIRL WOULD **EVER** READ AHEAD IN THE PROSPECTUS! DID SHE TELL YOU THAT EVERY TIME I TRIED TO TELL HER ABOUT HER PAST, SHE'D CUT MY **HEAD** OFF?

BUT...SHE'S LEAVING.

OH, GROW UP. SHE **HAS** TO, PUCKY. JUST LIKE I HAVE TO GET THINGS STRAIGHTENED OUT WITH SARAH BEFORE I CAN GO ON. OH, AND BY THE WAY, YOU'RE **NOT** A RABBIT. YOU JUST GOT IN THE WAY WHEN JULIE'S SPIRIT ANIMAL TRIED TO INCARNATE IN THIS PLANE. FEEL BETTER?

BUT...SHE'S **LEAVING!**

LEMMEE TRY THIS AGAIN. SHE **HAS** TO. OTHERWISE WE'LL ALL BE TRAPPED IN HERE **FOREVER**. DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT **YOUR** OUTBACK IS, WHEN SHE'S NOT AROUND?

AFTER ALL, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE REALLY NEEDS Y--

--OU...

SQUISH

VERY MATURE.

Ouch. I GOTTA WATCH OUT WHERE I WALK *BAREFOOT.*

MOM CALLED AND SAID BE SURE TO WRITE IF YOU NEED ANYTHING. CAN I CATCH A RIDE HOME ON YOUR WAY OUT?

DID YOU MENTION THERE'S A SLIM CHANCE THE WHOLE WORLD IS MY DREAM, AND IF I LEAVE THE CITY I'LL WAKE UP, THUS ENDING *EVERY-THING?*

WE-HAUL

WE-HAUL

NO, I LEFT THAT PART OUT.

PROBABLY JUST AS WELL.

IT'S NOT MY FAVORITE PART EITHER.

WHUMP

DARK ENOUGH IN HERE...

MAXX? YOU HERE?

I'VE GOT PEZ...

HMM. THAT USUALLY WORKS.

MAXX?

I'VE COME TO SAY GOODBYE.

BYE.

DAMMIT, MAXX. WHY ARE YOU ACTING THIS WAY?

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU THINK YOU'LL *DISAPPEAR* IF I LEAVE, RIGHT?

RIGHT, MAXX?

GOD, MAXX. YOU DO. IT'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT.

DAMN YOU! WHY DO I HAVE TO BE THE BAD GUY HERE?

MAXX, IF YOU *REALLY* CARED ABOUT ME, YOU WOULDN'T MAKE THIS ANY HARDER THAN IT ALREADY IS.

THEN I DON'T CARE.

NO!

I WILL *NOT* LET YOU END IT LIKE THIS.

YOU KNOW WHAT REALLY GETS ME? YOU'RE TOO SELFISH TO SEE I'M DOING ALL THIS FOR YOU.

THEN WHY BOTHER?

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS, YOU ASS?

WE SUPPOSEDLY TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER.

IS LEAVING YOUR WAY OF TAKING CARE OF ME?

UH... SURE.

IS THIS ALL THE LIFE YOU WANT? FIGHTING IN A WORLD THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, JUST SO YOU CAN PROTECT ME IN WAYS I DON'T NEED?

YES.

WELL, I WANT SOMETHING *MORE!*

I'M THROUGH BEGGING, JULIE.

I THINK, IF YOU LOOK DEEP INSIDE...

YOU ALREADY KNOW THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

YOU'RE RIGHT, MAXX.

I DO.

...STRONG ENOUGH...

...TO DO IT.

BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE...

YOU PACKED EVERYTHING?

UH-HUH. IS HE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT?

SURE.

ARE YOU GONNA BE ALL RIGHT?

NO, SARAH.

SLAM!

CAN WE JUST GO, SARAH?

ARE YOU SURE YOU GOT IT ALL?

YOU CAN ALWAYS COME BACK IF YOU NEED TO...

WE-HAUL

WE-HAUL

NO, I CAN'T.